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MONTANA SCHOOLS

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HARRIET MILLER
Superintendent

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The Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction is being sent to Montana schools. Supplies limit distribution to one copy per ten teachers, to be made available by each school administrator. Requests from teachers for individual copies will be filled by the state office while the supply lasts.

Dates: March 20-21, State FHA meeting and Pacific Northwest Council of Family Relations, Missoula . . . April 12-18, National Library Week . . . April 20-21, revised dates for Annual Administrators' Conference, Helena.

February is Citizenship Month. Be well-informed and act!

National Defense Education Act information given to the Legislature by Superintendent Harriet Miller shows that full participation by Montana in the new program would result in $2.2 million for education, half from state and half from federal funds. Major portion -- $1.4 million -- would go to strengthen science, mathematics and foreign language instruction. Guidance, counseling and testing, vocational education and statistical services also come under NDEA. The Legislature will decide whether to provide state funds to obtain the federal funds, which are available only on a matching basis.

Teacher certification changes, recommended by the State Committee on Teacher Supply, are up for legislative consideration in House Bill 144. Objective is to simplify certification while insuring high instructional standards and providing for the special problems of rural schools. Five major classifications -- professional, standard, administrative-supervisory, vocational and provisional -- would replace the present 25 types of certificates. Holders of present certificates would not lose any rights or privileges by the change; each would be eligible for that type of new certificate suited to his qualifications.

Professional certificate requirements: a teacher education program including a Bachelor's Degree plus one additional year of study;
Standard requirements: a Bachelor's Degree teacher education program;
Administrative-supervisory and vocational requirements: unchanged;
Provisional requirements: professional intent plus two years of college work for elementary teaching, or a Bachelor's Degree for secondary teaching.

The present elementary school standard certificate would be retained on a renewal basis, permitting present holders to qualify later for the new standard certificate. . . . An emergency authorization to teach would replace the present emergency certificate. Changes would take effect July 1, 1959.

A state curriculum director to coordinate the growing instructional services of the Department of Public Instruction and to assist the State Curriculum Committees will become a reality if House Bill 256 is passed and the necessary funds are appropriated.

Education opportunities for inmates of the State Prison will be provided by the State Correspondence School, a division of the Department of Public Instruction, if the Legislature approves House Bill 133.

Increased school revenue from state lands is being sought. The State Land Board, on motion of Superintendent Harriet Miller, has ordered a study of the decline in income from grazing leases on state school lands. House Bill 143, now under consideration by the Legislature, would raise the grazing rentals to compare with current rates on private lands and thus increase the interest and income Fund for the schools.

A director of school building services (House Bill 265), and a supervisor of school library services (House Bill 56) will be added to the state office to provide increased services to schools if the legislation is enacted and appropriations for the posts are made. These services, though required by law, are now limited due to lack of staff. Also requested are legislative appropriations to permit the State Superintendent to provide adequate services in health and physical education and conservation education.

Increased services to schools in mathematics, science and modern foreign languages will be possible under the National Defense Education Act, if the Montana Legislature provides for the state's participation.

Elimination of the $5,000 ceiling on teachers' salaries for retirement system purposes, recommended by the Teachers' Retirement Board of which the State Superintendent is a member, will be accomplished if Substitute House Bill 53 is successful. Approved by the House, the measure is now in the Senate.

A $21 million dollar appropriation to pay the state's full share of the Foundation Program for 1959-61 has been requested by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Legislators have been supplied with data re: school enrollments and current state deficiency.

> Payments to schools under the Foundation Program are set by law, but if the state appropriation is insufficient to make the full payments to which the schools are entitled, the local districts must make up the difference deficiency by additional property tax.

For this reason the Legislature is being urged to provide enough funds to pay the state's full share; under the present program this would require $21 million.

Expansion of special education for handicapped children will be encouraged if House Bill 94 becomes law, increasing by up to 50% the state reimbursement for the handicapped in approved special education programs.

A Commission on School District Reorganization to carry on studies begun with the Peabody Study is proposed in House Bill 306. The commission would be required to recommend legislation in 1961 for school district reorganization.

At least 48 other proposals affecting education were introduced in the House and Senate by the January 29 deadline for introduction of bills. Appropriation measures are still to be introduced.

If you desire more information about a specific piece of legislation, a letter to the State Superintendent will bring you a copy of the bill plus any additional data then available. February is Citizenship Month. Be informed and act!